

Message Text

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UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 3 STOCKHOLM 3136

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TAGS: TECH, ENRG, SW
SUBJECT: SWEDISH ENERGY POLICY

BEGIN SUMMARY:

THE FORMULATION OF A SWEDISH ENERGY POLICY HAS CONTINUED THROUGH THE SUMMER WITH THE PUBLICATION OF STUDIES, PRONOUNCEMENTS BY EXPERT REVIEW GROUPS, AND STATEMENTS BY COALITION POLITICIANS THAT THE STUDIES AND REVIEWS ARE UNCLEAR, OR BIASED FOR OR AGAINST NUCLEAR ENERGY, OR FAIL TO "ADDRESS THE ISSUES."

SEVERAL STUDIES HAVE APPEARED DURING THE MONTHS, ALL OF WHICH CONSTITUTE BASIC MATERIAL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ENERGY POLICY BILL TO BE PRESENTED BY THE GOVERNMENT TO THE PARLIAMENT BY DECEMBER 1978. SOME OF THE MORE IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE ENERGY SITUATION ARE AS FOLLOWS: END SUMMARY.

1. THE SWEDISH ENERGY COMMISSION'S MAIN REPORT (SOU 1978:17), ISSUED MARCH 29, 1978, WAS CRITICIZED BY PRIME MINISTER FALLDIN (SEE STOCKHOLM 1294, MARCH 31, 1978). ONE OF THE SIGNIFICANT OBSERVATIONS OF THE COMMISSION'S REPORT IS THAT NUCLEAR SAFETY RISKS ARE NO GREATER THAN UNCLASSIFIED

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THOSE FOR COAL AND OIL.

2. THE NUCLEAR FUEL SAFETY PROJECT, A JOINT PROGRAM SPONSORED BY THE POWER UTILITIES TO RESPOND TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE CONDITIONS ACT, NAMELY, TO SHOW HOW NUCLEAR WASTE CAN BE STORED IN AN ENTIRELY SAFE WAY WHETHER REPROCESSED OR NOT, PRODUCED TWO STUDIES: KBS I

(SEE STOCKHOLM A-26, FEBRUARY 28, 1978) WHICH DESCRIBED A METHOD FOR THE SAFE STORAGE OF REPROCESSED FUEL. KBS II, PUBLISHED JUNE 28, 1978, PROPOSED THAT UNREPROCESSED NUCLEAR FUEL WASTES CAN BE STORED IN SEALED COPPER CONTAINERS (SEE STOCKHOLM A-69, JULY 14, 1978 FOR A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED METHOD). ACCORDING TO THIS STUDY, RADIOACTIVE WASTES FROM 13 SWEDISH NUCLEAR POWER UNITS, AMOUNTING TO 9,000 TONS AFTER 30 YEARS OPERATION, MAY BE STORED ENTIRELY SAFELY AT 500 METERS DEPTH DIRECTLY IN SWEDISH ROCK "FOR HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF YEARS". THE POWER UTILITY COMPANIES STATED THAT "IF THE GOVERNMENT CANNOT REACH A DECISION NOW AND ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THE CONDITIONS ACT HAS BEEN MET, IT MEANS THAT THE ACT CANNOT BE COMPLIED WITH OVER FORESEEABLE TIME." ENERGY MINISTER JOHANSSON'S COMMENT ON THE KBS II REPORT WAS THAT "KBS' SECOND REPORT, LIKE THE FIRST, WILL BE SENT OUT TO REVIEWERS, INCLUDING INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS. NOT UNTIL 1979 CAN WE TAKE A POSITION ON THE MATERIAL. PROBLEMS REMAIN SUCH AS NUCLEAR WEAPONS PROLIFERATION, CONTROL MEASURES, SABOTAGE AND TERRORISM, AND WE HAVE TO MAKE OTHER POLITICAL JUDGMENTS." THE KBS II REPORT WAS PRAISED BY THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY AS ONE SHOWING "GREAT RESPONSIBILITY AND PROFESSIONAL SKILL." AMONG OTHER INTERNATIONAL REVIEWERS WERE THE JET PROPULSION LABORATORY AND THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA. SIR BRIAN UNCLASSIFIED

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FLOWERS, UK, STATED THAT SAFETY IN THE KBS METHOD IS "BEYOND REASONABLE DOUBT." THE CALIFORNIA ENERGY COMMISSION REGARDS THE KBS II SAFETY ANALYSIS AS "TOO OPTIMISTIC".

3. THE STATUS OF THE SWEDISH NUCLEAR FUEL SUPPLY COMPANY (SKBF) CONTRACT WITH THE FRENCH REPROCESSING COMPANY COGEMA REMAINS UNCHANGED. THE CONTRACT PROVIDES FOR THE REPROCESSING OF 620 TONS OF RADIOACTIVE WASTES FROM RINGHALS III AND FORSMARK I. ENERGY MINISTER JOHANSSON DECLARED THAT THE CONTRACT CONTAINS "UNCERTAINTIES." FURTHERMORE, MINISTER JOHANSSON STATED EARLIER THAT THE CONTRACT MUST BE APPROVED BY THE GOS AND GOF THROUGH AN EXCHANGE OF LETTERS. THE EXCHANGE OF LETTERS, TO HAVE BEEN COMPLETED BY JULY 14, 1978, HAS NOT OCCURRED. IF THE GOVERNMENTS DO NOT AGREE ON THE EXCHANGE THEN SKBF AND COGEMA HAVE THE RIGHT TO TERMINATE THE CONTRACT BEFORE AUGUST 13, 1978. AS OF AUGUST 10, 1978, NEITHER AUSTRIA NOR GERMANY HAS SIGNED A REPROCESSING AGREEMENT WITH THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT. A SWEDISH DELEGATION WENT TO FRANCE TO DISCUSS THE SKBF-COGEMA CONTRACT CONDITIONS. THE COUTCOME OF THESE

DISCUSSIONS IS UNKNOWN.

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IN ADDITION OF MINISTER JOHANSSON'S REFERENCE TO
UNCERTAINTIES IN THE CONTRACT, MENTION HAS BEEN MADE OF
THE NEED FOR U.S. APPROVAL TO SHIP NUCLEAR WASTE FROM
SWEDEN TO FRANCE AND, DURING THE WINTER OF 1977, THE GOS
ANNOUNCED THAT IT WOULD NOT PERMIT THE EXPORT OF NUCLEAR
WASTES FOR REPROCESSING BEFORE THE COMPLETION OF THE
INTERNATIONAL NUCLEAR FUEL CYCLE EVALUATION (INFCE)
REPORT. DURING RECENT MONTHS, ENERGY MINISTER JOHANSSON
APPEARS TO HAVE SHIFTED HIS POSITION FROM THE ACCEPTANCE
OF POSSIBLE REPROCESSING OF NUCLEAR WASTE TO THAT OF
DIRECT STORAGE OF UNREPROCESSED NUCLEAR WASTE.
THE NATIONAL RADIATION PROTECTION INSTITUTE (SSI) HAS
REVIEWED THE REPROCESSING CONTRACT AND DECLARED THAT IT
MEETS BOTH THE RADIATION PROTECTION LAW AND THE ATOMIC
ENERGY LAW. PROFESSOR LINDELL, HEAD OF SSI, REFERRED TO
THE CONDITIONS ACT AS A POLITICAL LAW AND THAT THE ACT'S
INTERPRETATION IS A POLITICAL ISSUE. HE BELIEVES THAT
THE SKBF-COGEA CONTRACT DOES NOT FULFILL THE CONDITIONS
ACT. THE NATIONAL NUCLEAR POWER INSPECTORATE HAS ALSO
REVIEWED THE SKBF-COGEA CONTRACT AND STATED THAT
RINGHALS III AND FORSMARK I SHOULD BE LOADED AND THAT
THE CONTRACT IS "JURIDICALLY BINDING."

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4. RINGHALS III (REACTOR NUMBER 7) HAS BEEN READY TO LOAD SINCE LAST FALL. THE UNIT IS BEING MAINTAINED BY A SMALL STAFF. FORSMARK I (REACTOR NUMBER 8) WAS READY TO LOAD ON MARCH 29, 1978, BUT REMAINS IN STAND-BY CONDITION. THE POWER COMPANIES' APPLICATIONS FOR PERMISSION TO OPERATE BOTH REACTORS ARE BASED ON THE KBS I PROJECT (I.E., STORAGE OF REPROCESSED NUCLEAR WASTES) AND THE SKBF-COGEA CONTRACT. ENERGY MINISTER JOHANSSON HAS PROMISED A DECISION AROUND SEPTEMBER 1.

5. THE POSITION OF THE COALITION POLITICAL PARTIES REMAINS ESSENTIALLY UNCHANGED. THE CENTER PARTY FIRMLY BELIEVES THAT THE WASTE PROBLEM CANNOT BE SOLVED. OLA ULLSTEN, LIBERAL PARTY LEADER AND DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER HAS DECLARED THAT A DECISION ON NUCLEAR POWER, INCLUDING THE LOADING OF RINGHALS III AND ROSMARK I, IS NECESSARY BEFORE THE ELECTION NEXT YEAR. MODERATE PARTY LEADER AND MINISTER OF ECONOMY GOSTA BOHMAN STATED THAT "WE MODERATES AND LIBERALS BELIEVE THAT TECHNOLOGY CAN BE SOLVED BY TECHNOLOGISTS, WHILE THE CENTER IS MORE PESSIMISTIC. IT CAN BE DIFFICULT WHEN OPTIMISTS OPPOSE PESSIMISTS." THE MODERATES AND THE LIBERALS HAVE MADE THE POINT THAT "CLEAR INSTRUCTION MUST COME," PREFERABLY IN SEPTEMBER, FOR JURIDICAL AND POLITICAL REASONS. CENTER PARTY LEADERSHIP IS UNDER INCREASING PRESSURE FROM THE MODERATES AND THE LIBERALS TO TRY TO FIND SOME COMPROMISE.

6. THE MAJORITY OF THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS BELIEVE THAT THE PARLIAMENT'S 1975 ENERGY POLICY IS STILL VALID AND THAT NO CHANGES IN SWEDEN'S ENERGY PROGRAMS, INCLUDING THE NUCLEAR COMPONENT, ARE REQUIRED. CARL LIDBOM, SOCIAL DEMOCRAT AND PARLIAMENTARIAN, CRITICIZED THE UNCLASSIFIED

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COALITION GOVERNMENT FOR ITS INCONSISTENCIES AND FAILURES TO MAKE DECISIONS. AMONG THE INCONSISTENCIES, LIDBOM POINTS TO (A) THE GOVERNMENT'S ENCOURAGEMENT TO SEARCH FOR URANIUM, BUT THE DISCOURAGEMENT OF URANIUM MINING; (B) CONTINUED CONSTRUCTION OF NUCLEAR REACTORS, BUT FAILURE TO USE REACTORS ALREADY CONSTRUCTED, I.E., RINGHALS III AND FORSMARK I; AND (C) POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD THE EXPORT OF NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY, BUT PURSUIT OF A POLICY WHICH MEANS THE DISSIPATION OF SWEDISH KNOWLEDGE AND COMPETENCE.

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THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS REFER TO THE CREATION OF
UNNECESSARY UNEMPLOYMENT AND "LOADING THE TAX PAYERS
WITH BILLIONS OF CROWNS IN DAMAGES FOR REACTORS WHICH
ARE UNUSED" IF THE COALITION GOVERNMENT SUCCEEDS IN
KILLING THE NUCLEAR ENERGY PROGRAM. ACCORDING TO LIDBOM
"THE MYTH THAT RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCES WILL PRODUCE
SAVINGS (IN SWEDEN) SUFFICIENT TO REDUCE THE NEED FOR
NUCLEAR ENERGY IS DEAD."

OPPOSITION CRITICS ALSO POINT OUT THAT "EITHER THE
GOVERNMENT APPROVES RINGHALS III AND FORSMARK I
APPLICATIONS AND GUARANTEES (AS THE CONDITIONS ACT IS
WRITTEN) THAT THE WASTE PROBLEM IS CONCLUSIVELY SOLVED,"
OR THEY DISAPPROVE AND "THE DAMAGES CLAUSE" OF THE
CONDITIONS ACT IS BROUGHT INTO FORCE. FURTHERMORE,
DISAPPROVAL MEANS THAT A DECOMMISSIONING PLAN FOR THE
PRESENT OPERATIONAL REACTORS MUST BE IMPLEMENTED.

7. COMMENT: MOST OBSERVERS BELIEVE THAT THE GOVERNMENT
MUST MAKE A DECISION ON RINGHALS III AND FORSMARK I
BEFORE AN ENERGY POLICY BILL CAN BE PRESENTED TO THE
PARLIAMENT LATER THIS YEAR. ENERGY MINISTER JOHANSSON
HAS PROMISED TO GIVE "INFORMATION" ABOUT THESE REACTORS
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AROUND SEPTEMBER 1. THE COALITION GOVERNMENT HAS A
REMARKABLE RECORD FOR DELAYING DEADLINES AND POSTPONING

DECISIONS IN THE ENERGY FIELD. MANY OBSERVERS BELIEVE THAT THE GOVERNMENT MAY ELECT ONE OR A COMBINATION OF THE FOLLOWING POSSIBLE COURSES OF ACTION: (A) REACTORS 7 AND 8 MAY BE LOADED, BUT PERMISSION TO OPERATE IS VALID ONLY UNTIL THE COMPLETION OF THE INFCE REPORT IN 1979, (B) POSTPONE THE DECISION ON THESE REACTORS TO CONTINUE STUDY OF STORAGE OF RADIOACTIVE WASTES, (C) DECLARE THAT THE NUCLEAR WASTE PROBLEMS CANNOT BE SOLVED IN A SATISFACTORY WAY AND NO MORE REACTORS MAY BE LOADED, AND (D) AGREE ON A NUCLEAR POWER PORGRAM CONSISTING OF 10 REACTORS (SIX IN OPERATION, TIME-LIMITED APPROVAL OF REACTORS 7 AND 8, AND "SNAIL PACE" CONSTRUCTION OF 9 AND 10).

8. IT IS CLEAR THAT THE COALITION GOVERNMENT HAS BECOME TANGLED IN A WEB OF CONSIDERABLE CONFUSIION THROUGH ENACTMENT OF THE CONDITIONS ACT. THIS ACT LIMITS THE GOVERNMENT TO TWO COURSES OF ACTION: (AL APPROVAL OF RINGHALS III AND FORSMARK I THEREBY ACKNOWLEDGING THAT THE NUCLEAR WASTE PROBLEM HAS BEEN SOLVED IN A SATISFACTORY WAY AND ALSO CLEARING THE WAY FOR COMPLETION OF 13 OR MORE NUCLEAR REACTORS OR (B) DISAPPROVAL OF THESE TWO REACTORS WHICH SIGNIFIES AN END TO THE NUCLEAR POWER PROGRAM IN SWEDEN (REACTORS 7 AND 8 ARE UNUSED, CONSTRUCTION ON 9 AND 10 STOPS, AND THE SIX REACTORS IN OPERATION ARE DECOMMISSIONED).

9. THE COALITION GOVERNMENT'S DILEMMA IS THAT, THUS FAR, THERE IS NO INDICATION THAT FALLDIN OR HAS CENTER PARTY IS WILLING TO SUPPORT (A) ABOVE (INDEED, THERE ARE SIGNALS THAT THEY WILL NOT) WHILE, ON THE HAND, THERE IS NO INCLINATION BY THE MODERATES AND LIBERALS TO ALLOW UNCLASSIFIED

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FALLDIN TO FORCE (B) ABOVE SINCE THAT COURSE WILL MARK THE BEGINNING OF THE END OF NUCLEAR ENERGY IN SWEDEN. THE INTRA-COALITION NEGOTIATIONS ON THE NUCLEAR ENERGY ISSUE ARE TO BEGIN SHORTLY AND MAY STRAIN FURTHER EXISTING DIFFERENCES AMONG THE PARTIES. ONE SHOULD NOT DISCOUNT THE POSSIBILITY OF COALITION AGREEMENT ONLY ON DELAYING FURTHER SIGNIFICANT DECISIONMAKING, I.E., TO CONTINUE PAST PATTERNS OF POSTPONING FINAL CHOICES IN THE HOPE THAT ONE SIDE OR THE OTHER WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT WILL SWITCH. ON THE OTHER HAND, SEVERAL SOURCES HAVE INFORMED THE EMBASSY OVER THE SUMMER THAT THERE WILL BE A SUBSTANTIVE DECISION OF SOME KIND IN LATE AUGUST OR EARLY SEPTEMBER.
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